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Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 26. Disarmament

1. At its 16th and 17th meetings, on 15 June 1998, the Committee considered proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. It had before it proposals in respect of programme 26, Disarmament.

2. The Deputy Director of the Department for Disarmament Affairs introduced programme 26 and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. The importance of the programme was emphasized and support was expressed for the re-establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. In view of the important role that the Department would play in the promotion of international peace and security, regret was expressed that the proposed revisions to programme 26 contained only minimal changes. The view was expressed that the Department for Disarmament Affairs had been established to respond more effectively to the priorities of the Member States in various aspects of the area of disarmament and that, therefore, the new Department should be fully prepared to react to the wishes of Member States. Views were expressed that attention should be drawn to recent developments in the international arena related to the questions of nuclear non-proliferation and the proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament, which might require the Department to devote even greater attention to its work in that field.

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4. Appreciation was expressed for the role of the regional centres in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and on the emphasis placed by the Department on the important role that those centres were likely to take on in the area of disarmament.

5. It was pointed out that the mandate of the Department was contained in General Assembly resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997. At this stage, there was no need to change the mandate of the Department. The view was expressed that the report of the Secretary-General (A/52/303) referred to in General Assembly resolution 52/220 did not accurately reflect the existing structure of the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

6. Views were expressed that the activities currently undertaken under programme 26, Disarmament, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/39 B of 9 December 1997 should be transferred to programme 1, Political affairs.

7. Concern was expressed about the emphasis placed on the issues of small arms and light weapons and on the proposed assistance to affected States in the consolidation of peace through "practical" disarmament measures. The view was expressed that the assistance referred to would be in the area of small arms and that the increasing importance placed on small arms and light weapons should not be at the expense of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Queries were raised as to how it was decided whether a disarmament measure was practical or not. The view was expressed that there was no mandate for the narrative proposed in paragraph 26.5 of the revisions. Others welcomed and supported the concepts expressed in the proposed revision. The view was expressed that the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons reaffirmed the need to carry out the systematic and progressive efforts towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It was emphasized that priorities could not be revised if no agreement was reached among Member States. In this connection the view was expressed that the elimination of nuclear weapons was the first priority for the United Nations in the field of disarmament, in accordance with the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, of 1978, which had the consensus of the Member States of the Organization.

8. On the proposed revisions to existing paragraph 26.5, which have been incorporated into the new paragraph 26.6, objections were raised as to the inclusion, in the third sentence of the paragraph, of the phrase "in particular on issues commanding political consensus among Member States".

9. On the legislative mandates of the programme, attention was drawn to the selective interpretation by the Secretariat of the mandates of the programme, in particular by making references to parts of General Assembly resolution 52/38 of 9 December 1997, instead of including the entire resolution. The need to read resolutions in a comprehensive way was emphasized and the Secretariat was requested to ensure a more objective and transparent rendering of those resolutions. Objections were raised to the proposed deletion of references to General Assembly resolutions 2992 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 entitled Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, and resolution 50/76 of 12 December 1995, entitled Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, since those resolutions provided important mandates for the programme.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The Committee recommended approval of the proposed revisions to programme 26 of the medium-term plan, subject to the following modifications:

(a) *Delete* the revisions to paragraphs 26.4, 26.5 and 26.6;

(b) Under Legislative mandates:

(i) ***Retain*** General Assembly resolutions 2992 (XXVII) and 50/76, proposed for deletion;

(ii) Under "***Replace*** the following resolutions", ***for*** 37/99, 46/36 and 50/70 with 52/38 ***read*** 37/99, 42/45, 46/36 and 50/70 with 52/38;

(iii) Under "***Replace*** the following resolutions" ***delete*** 42/45 with 52/38 D;

(iv) Under "***Add*** the following resolutions", ***delete*** the references to the following parts of General Assembly resolution 52/38:

52/38 A	Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction
52/38 B and R	Transparency in armaments
52/38 C	Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them
52/38 G	Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures
52/38 J	Small arms
52/38 S	Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia

(v) Under "***Add*** the following resolutions" ***insert***

52/220, annex III	Changes to be made in the programme narrative contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals"

11. The Committee further recommended that existing paragraph 26.2 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/219 of 18 December 1996, should be revised by adding, after the word "support", the phrase "at Geneva and substantive secretariat support at Headquarters".